

THE TIMES ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE

FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES 1781.

BY JOHN STEVEN MCGROARTY.

John Steven McGroarty, poet, historian and sage of the green Verdugo Hills, whose contributions have illuminated this page for the past two years, has, we learn, like "his neighbor who plays the lute," made a loan from God and has gone forth to spend it. He will be absent for about four weeks. But will immediately upon his return, resume the conduct of this page.

[Editor.]

force, cajole, fool or coax a California Indian to work. They were born lazy and shiftless. Why should they work in a land where Nature made it entirely unnecessary and really foolish to do so? Fruit, fish fowl and flesh were here in abundance. All they had to do was to reach out their hands for all these things. As for clothes, they didn't need them and were far more comfortable without them. Consequently, they didn't wear clothes.

Yet the Padres changed all that. The work they induced those "diggers" to do is one of the wonders of the world, even to this day. If anyone doubts it, let him travel the King's Highway from San Diego to Sonoma, and he will see for himself. How they built that great chain of twenty-one Missions, many of them architectural wonders, and massive at that, may well rank with the mystery of the pyramids.

"Queen of the Missions" Founded at San Gabriel.

THE fourth of these Missions, and the greatest, having been justly styled the "Queen of the Missions," was San Gabriel. And this brings us to the romantic tale of how Los Angeles came to be; for San Gabriel is the Mother of Los Angeles.

Ten years after the Mission San Gabriel had been founded, came the order of the King to found the Pueblo of Los Angeles, and, in accordance therewith, Don Felipe

Just what was the personal appearance of Don Felipe, that is to say, what manner of looking man he was extraneous of his clothes, will become the subject of important investigation when the sculptor is face to face with the task of making his statue. From the material available in the Spanish archives at Berkeley, however, it would seem that Don Felipe was a man to whom the tall, lean type of Spanish-Californian bears a striking resemblance.

Following Don Felipe out of Monterey on this occasion was his own troop of cavalry, arrayed in their best uniforms, carbines and swords, and their leather jackets that were worn to ward off the arrows of the Indians. His Excellency and his escort must have greatly enjoyed their ride down through the golden reaches of the sun from Monterey. The King's Highway was then a fairly well-broken trail and they had their choice of a thousand picked spots ideal for camping, with fishes from the rivers and the sea, game everywhere and wild fruit in the lush harvest on every hand.

In due time the party made its appearance at San Gabriel. Indian runners had prepared the Mission for the coming of its illustrious guest. The cavalcade was met far off and guided to the care of the Padres who were waiting with the best of everything.

There was little or no money in California in those days, but the people had no

Gobernador, the colors of the rainbow in it, and all sorts and conditions of humanity composing it.

In the center of the procession were the Padres of the Mission in their brown Franciscan robes, white cords around their waists, sandals on their feet. Indians, barefoot or shod with zapatas, old and young Indians, Indian women and, doubtless, some Indian children followed for it would have been pretty difficult to make them all stay at home when there was so much doing. Then there were the pobladores, or settlers, who were to form the first families of this pueblo that was to be.

It was probably a hot morning, as our September mornings are apt to be, and certainly it was very dusty on the King's Highway with so many hoofs and feet to kick up the dust. There must have been at least a couple of thousand persons in the procession. But it is not likely that they were distressed. Sun and wind were sister and brother to them. Walking was an incident and not a task.

Three leagues westward journeyed the cavalcade, and then Don Felipe wheeled on his horse and the bugler called a halt. They had come to the spot. It was probably about where the fountain now splashes on sunny mornings and in the silvery beams of the moon in the old Plaza.

Don Felipe descended from his steed. Unsheathing his sword he drove it into the ground, saying:

"Here, in the name of God and our Sovereign King shall we build the Pueblo of Our Lady the Queen of the Angels."

That was the name they gave it—this wonder city of a thousand domes—on that far day in 1781.

They raised a great cross hewn from timbers that the Indians had felled and drawn with oxen from some distant canyon. The Te Deum was chanted. The Indian Choristers from the Mission sang other hymns, singing them in Latin, and doubtless singing them as well as the Indians sang at Carmel when Robert Louis Stevenson heard them. "They have the Gregorian music at their finger ends," said R.L.S., "and pronounce the Latin so correctly that I could follow the meaning as they sang." The Gobernador read the Proclamation of the King, and likely made a speech. The troopers fired volleys of musketry.

The original population consisted of nine families and, after the Plaza was staked out, these families were apportioned house lots on three sides of the square. In addition they were given lands for cultivation, and an irrigation ditch was surveyed from the Los Angeles River which was then called "Porciuncula."

It was a great day. When, in the purpled dusk of evening, Don Felipe bade the Padres farewell and turned homeward to his capital, he left behind him a new-born city.

Los Angeles had its ups and downs for many a year after that. For a long time it was of no consequence whatever as a place. But it persisted and survived, no doubt because of the great destiny that awaited it in the hidden mists of future times.

It is today one of the most fascinating of cities, but to those who dream and grope into the romances of the past, it has never had an hour so fascinating as the hour of its birth.



After an early mass the fateful march began.

THE city of Los Angeles was born on September 4, year of Our Lord, 1781. Consequently, it celebrates this year, the one hundred and thirty-ninth anniversary of its birth.

From this it will be seen that Los Angeles is among the elder cities of America, chronologically. As to population and industrial importance it stands the tenth.

In the Hall of Fame, it takes second place to no other. It is as well known as London, Paris or New York. If you were in the farthest corner of a foreign land addressing a letter to a friend in Los Angeles the letter would reach the friend promptly and without delay though you would place upon the envelope the name of Los Angeles only, without adding either the name of the State or the country.

The way that Los Angeles came to be a city at all is in itself a chapter in romance.

Away back in the old, old times when Spain was first establishing a foothold on the western shores of America, the good king of Castile and Leon planned how things should go over here. His plan was, indeed, a very practical one.

The first step was to establish the missions. Adjacent to each Mission was to be a Presidio so that the soldiers would be handy to protect the Padres from hostile Indians. The third and last step in the plan was to found Pueblos, or towns, between the Missions, in order that the country might be colonized.

Three Pueblos Materialized As Part of the Plan.

THE plan was never carried out to its fullness. Only four or five Presidios ever materialized, and only three Pueblos—San Jose, Los Angeles and Branciforte at Santa Cruz. The last-named started out the most promising but finally suffered a total collapse. That's another story, however.

San Jose and Los Angeles managed to hang on though they had their own discouragements.

The Missions were the only part of the plan of good King Carlos that really made good from the start. Maybe it was because of the wonderful patience, genius and industry of the Padres in handling the Indians. They got the Indian to work and that was no slight achievement—to either



In due time the party made its appearance at San Gabriel.

de Neve, who was then the Gobernador, proceeded from the capital at Monterey with the Royal Proclamation in his pocket.

Some time there will be a statue of Don Felipe de Neve erected in the old Plaza, because of the fact that he was the founder of the city. However, he was something of a figure in history outside of that. He was not the greatest of the ten men who were successively governors of California during the time that it was a province of Spain, but he was by no means the least.

He had already founded the Pueblo of San Jose. Before coming to California he was a cavalry officer at Queretaro in Mexico. Soon after he was installed as Governor at Monterey he issued his famous "Reglamento," which was a complete code of laws for the Province of California. It is regarded to this day as a very able and statesmanlike document.

Well, anyway, it was Don Felipe who had the honor of putting Los Angeles on the map, and it must be said that he did it in style and in a manner that the King himself would have approved.

There was no lack of pomp in California, those days. There could be no lack of pomp in anything that then was attached to Spain, ruling half the world, and its court the most gorgeous in Europe.

So, when Don Felipe de Neve, the Gobernador, set out from sun-swept, glamorous Monterey, to found a new city, he set out with all the trimmings.

Founder of City Came Like An Ancient Knight.

HE WAS himself arrayed in the splendor of the trappings that went with his high office—golden sword, ruffled lace shirt and cuffs, rich velvet jacket, slashed breeches appliqued with silver and gold, plumes on his hat, long riding boots. Upon the horse he rode was a saddle and a bridle worth a king's ransom.

need of money. They had everything that money could buy, without the bother of counting the change.

Los Angeles Founded with Pomp and Circumstance.

WHEN the Governor and his party were well rested at the Mission they set out upon a sunny and forever memorable morning to effect the orders of the King. All was bustle and excitement at San Gabriel. There was early mass and a good breakfast. The bugle flung its wild echoes across the hush of the bright, fruitful valley. The banners of the King and of Our Lady were lifted above the stirrups of the troopers, and then the fateful march began.

It was a motley throng in every sense of the word that followed the lead of the



"Here in the name of God and our Sovereign King shall we build the Pueblo of Our Lady, the Queen of the Angels."